
A Linguistic-Stylistic Analysis of Newspaper Reportage

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the language of newspaper reportage. Its central concern is on the corruption story about the unspent three hundred million naira of the Federal Ministry of Health in 2007 which seriously indicted the daughter of former President Obasanjo. Three daily newspapers: Daily Sun, Daily Trust and Leadership published between 1st and 31st May, 2008 are selected. Five reports are subjected to three levels of linguistic analyses: graphological, lexical and syntactic with the semantic implication of each level highlighted. It is discovered that some journalists report objectively, distancing themselves from the stories while some bring personal biases and emotions into their stories. In the end the paper recommends that journalists should consider the linguistic competences of their readers while making their choices of words and structures in the different stories they write.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is primarily concerned with the language and style of newspaper reportage on the theme of corruption. It narrows its scope down to the presentation of the scam witnessed in the Federal Ministry of Health about unspent three hundred million naira budgetary allocation to that Ministry in the year 2007. Journalists are trained to use language in special ways that could enhance the overall development of any society, or they may end up tearing the whole land apart if language is not properly controlled. It is an established fact that every field of human Endeavour has certain linguistic features that make its language distinct. The journalism profession is no exception. In this paper I have tried to avoid using the term ‘journalese’ as the technical word of official register denoting the peculiarities and linguistic nuances of the practitioners of journalism. This is simply owing to the fact that the 21st Century Chambers Dictionary (2006) defines the term ‘Journalese’ as being “derogatory, the language is typically shallow and full of clichés and jargons, used by less able journalists.”

Hence this paper opts to examine other linguistic features that make the journalistic style peculiar thus qualifying journalists as serious nation builders. It is an incontrovertible fact that language is a human attribute that enables him to communicate with other people of like or even opposing dispositions. When, as scholars we engage in the study of some of the elements of this medium of human communication, then we are said to be engaged in an enterprise known as linguistics. If one can simply define linguistics as the scientific study of language as we seem to have done above, the definition of style has not received such simplicity of definition among scholars of the literary and linguistic enterprises. But this paper is not interested in the seemingly academic battle that has been raging over the generally acceptable definition of the term ‘style.’ However, a good number of scholars (Enkvist 1964, Crystal and Davy 1969, Chatman 1971, Fowler 1971 and Fakuade 1998) have come to agree that the term *style* refers to how an author says or writes whatever he wants to say or write. This ‘how’ is only realized through a systematic examination of the text. In the same vein ‘stylistics’ then is the study of style. It is this systematic examination or analysis of text that gives birth to this paper which seeks to analyze how journalists use and deploy language when reporting on some sensitive issues of national and international interests.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Readers of newspapers often complain about the language of the reportage. These complaints bother mainly on the use of lexical items and the syntactic structure of some sentences. The problem of this

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study thus hinges on the premise that some journalists often resort to the use of clichés, jargons and complex syntactic sentence structures which they believe constitute their style of writing.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Journalism is a profession practised by people who are relatively trained in the art of information dissemination. Reporters, especially in the print media, choose words that would convey specific meanings to their intended or target audience within a particular thematic framework. The present study examines the language of newspaper reportage as it concerns the theme of corruption with the scam over the unspent three hundred million naira of the Federal Ministry of Health in the 2007 budget. Specifically, therefore, the study examines:

- The choice of lexical items employed by Nigerian journalists in the reportage of the unspent three hundred million naira scam at the Federal Ministry of Health;
- The style of presentation of information in terms of syntactic structure and other linguistic-stylistic components.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions have been posited as a guide towards the achievement of the above stated objectives:

- What is the linguistic implication of the choice of words made by journalists in their reportage of corruption stories?
- What specific style is discernible in the presentation of information in terms of syntactic structure and other stylistic components of their stories?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The choice of words (diction) determines to a very large extent the peculiarities of every field of study. In an attempt to communicate to a group of people, individuals take recourse to a wide range of vocabulary items. This explains why Malgwi (2009) posits that anyone who uses a language knows the importance of vocabulary for effective communication. The idea of choice of words presupposes the inevitability of selection. Thus, different professions and practitioners select words based on certain dispositions and peculiarities of their fields. This specialized selection of words or expressions associated with a particular activity, profession or specialized field of human endeavor is tagged register (Malgwi 2009).

This paper is primarily concerned with a linguistic-stylistic analysis of the language of newspaper reportage. By implication, what it entails is that there are certain linguistic phenomena that make the style of newspaper reportage unique. According to Agu (2008) the study of style among other things involves an examination of syntax, diction, idioms, and imagery. At its simplest level, syntax refers to the structure of sentences; diction is the writer's choice of words and manner of deploying them to achieve maximum artistic effects. As noted earlier, the study of style also involves an examination of the writer's use of figurative language and other related devices such as idioms and imagery. These aspects of language, according to Agu (2008) are used to give a written work verbal beauty, economy of words and structure and thematic depth. What it all adds up to is that we have to examine very briefly what constitutes the language of the media especially as it affects the language of newspaper stories.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE MEDIA

The language of the media especially newspaper reportage is peculiar in a number of ways. These in turn constitute the style of journalistic writing. This, of course does not completely negate the fact that different writers bring their individual differences to bear in their write-ups. What we identify and analyze in the present study, however, are those linguistic and stylistic points which are common to a whole corpus of journalistic writing. For instance, we know that almost every newspaper carries headlines. The headline of a story, by way of definition, is the short summary which appears above articles in a newspaper or on a website (BBC 2003:2). Most often the headlines of news stories are not written in the form of full sentences. Consequently, any good student of stylistics or discourse analysis will discover that the headlines of news stories often come with either nominal or verbal ellipses. The implication here is that some words are deliberately left out by the journalists with the sole purpose of making the headlines less verbose and more 'catchy' to the eye. The words omitted could be the very ones that carry much of the information. Thus, the elided words stylistically create

suspense thereby motivating readers to probe into the contents of the stories. Other word classes that are usually omitted in headlines are the ‘articles’, ‘auxiliary verbs’, ‘possessive adjectives’ and so forth.

Since the case study selected for this paper is a newspaper report (on the subject matter of corruption), it will be pertinent at this point to make a few remarks about the language of newspaper reports. A news report in itself gives details of a news story. The reporter needs to choose the words he or she needs to make the story clear and unbiased. Generally, the purpose of a news report is usually to give the reader or listener information in an interesting but objective way. To do this, journalists often use synonyms, that is, words which have mainly the same meaning (BBC 2003). The Wellington (1998) Document on the ‘Language of News Stories summarizes the above points as:

News writing tends to be:

Impersonal to make it appear objective (to distance the reporter from the story) hence: written in the third *person*; Use of direct speech or indirect speech which is attributed to someone other than the reporter; Some use of passive verbs but usually only when someone who is being quoted wants to distance themselves from an issue and to show their objectivity about an issue.

THE FRONT PAGE OF A DAILY NEWSPAPER

Just as there are conventions about how we spell, punctuate, or lay out a formal letter, so there are established conventions about how the front page of a daily newspaper is presented.

These conventions include:

- the font and style of the **masthead**, which flies the flag for the newspaper;
- the use and impact of **headlines** and **crossheads**, which are subheadings between paragraphs;
- the **placement** of the lead story;
- the acknowledgment of reporters' names (known as **bylines**) and of other sources, along with the **dateline**;
- the use of photos with their explanatory **captions**;
- the use of diagrams, tables, and other **infographics**, which summarizes information into visual form;
- the use of columns, **boxes**, stories going across the page;
- The variety in presentation of type, including reversed type of white on black; the use of space, including white space, and other aspects of layout and presentation, which are explained in sections that follow.

A write-up of the scope we are dealing with here is not enough to say all there is to say on the language and style of newspaper reportage. So we will at this point look at other important sections of our study and leave the task of an elaborate review of literature for another day and forum.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This is a corpus-based linguistic study. For a proper appreciation of this methodological framework, I consider it pertinent to adopt the definition of the concept, corpus, as enunciated by the Encyclopedia Britannica Dictionary thus: “...*all the writings or works of a particular kind or on a particular subject; esp.: the complete works of an author* **b**:*a collection or body of knowledge or evidence; esp.: a collection of recorded utterances used as a basis for the descriptive analysis of a language.*” The ‘**b**’ part of this definition is more apt for our purpose in this paper since we intend to collect some stories from some Nigeria Newspapers and use same as a basis for the descriptive analysis of the language of newspaper reportage. Thus, it will not be out of place to say that the design of this study is descriptive and analytical in outlook.

Consequently, the corpus for this study is derived from the corruption stories about the unspent three hundred million naira 2007 budgetary allocation to the Federal Ministry of Health. A total of three newspapers are purposively selected for analysis. The stories are marked as appendices **A, B, C, D** and **E** (see the attached appendices). Thus the corpus on which this study is based is obtained from three

Nigeria Dailies: Daily Trust, Daily Sun and Leadership (all published between 1st-31st may, 2008). Five articles written on the theme of corruption are subjected to three levels of linguistic analyses: graphological, lexical, and syntactic (the semantic implication at each level will be discussed as appropriate without necessarily assigning a separate sub-head to semantic analysis.

Findings and discussion

GRAPHOLOGICAL FEATURES

These have to do with the use of letters; the capitalization of some letters, the choice of type size (or font size), colour of presentation (where applicable) and all those other physical features of the written expression (Fakuade, Ojo, Sharda and Abdullahi 2005). The graphological features in the five selected articles attract attention to themselves. They are encapsulated in the headlines of the three papers. In appendix ‘A’, for instance, the headline appears like a miniature billboard advertisement promo “**N300M Scam:**” This is more of an alert to the prospective reader. Then directly underneath this caption in a more elaborate and larger font is an explanatory rider: “**Iyabo weeps.**” Then directly under this caption, we are given the concluding part of the headline still on the same front page, beginning with three elliptical dots thus “**...Sent to police cell.**” Graphologically, therefore, one will quickly observe that the headline of the major story in Appendix ‘A’ follows three stylistic movements. The choice of the word, ‘movement’ is deliberate because the headline is presented graphically as if the reader is being invited to witness the intricate moves in a game of chess. Thus in a continuation of the same story on page 5 the headline is reduced to a very simple sentence: ‘**Iyabo weeps**’. In Appendix ‘B’, the story comes in a very simple phrase: ‘**In sympathy with Grange**’. Here the graphological point that is worth noting is the use of capital letters in the first letter of the preposition which begins the entire phrase and in the first letter of the minister, Grange. Thus only the letters ‘I’ and ‘G’ are capitalized. This is in conformity with the rules of basic grammar of the English language. This is very much unlike the journalistic style where the first letter of each of the words in the headline would be capitalized for emphatic purposes. In appendix ‘C’, the graphological features in the use of capitalization follow the same pattern already mentioned in that of Appendix ‘B’ though with a little difference. The headline of the story as witnessed in the *Daily Sun of Thursday, May 15th, 2008* (that is Appendix C) reads: ‘**IyaboObasanjo afraid of trial EFCC.**’ The difference which has been indicated above is on the capitalization of the letters ‘EFCC’. This is grammatically correct because EFCC is not a word but an abbreviation which stands for the anti-graft body: Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. The dash after the word ‘trial’ is also significant both at the levels of syntax and graphology. On the axis of graphology it provides the break which the reader needs before getting to the agentive which is the EFCC. Syntactically, it serves to provide a kind of transition which at the same time provides the clue to an ellipsis. Ordinarily, the sentence would have read: ‘**IyaboObasanjo afraid of trial, says the EFCC.** Now the verb ‘says’ is removed and in its position, the dash is inserted. This observation is taken care of in the next headline which reads: ‘**IyaboObasanjo: ShehuSani accuses EFCC, police of cover-up.**’ Here the colon provides the missing link without which the headline would make no sense whatsoever. In the last appendix (E), the headline is written in a complete sentence though in an inverted format viz: ‘**IyaboObasanjo must be tried in court, Lamorde says.**’ Again, it is noted on the point of graphology that in the five articles, it is only in Appendices ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘E’ that the articles begin with drop cap and with the author’s byline appearing in ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘E’.

LEXICAL FEATURES

It is a common expression in Nigeria to refer to journalists as members of the fourth estate of the realm. This is due largely to the role they play in nation building. Another undisputable fact is that these journalists build the nation or even contribute in destroying what has been built over the years through the medium of words. In this section of our discussion, we shall examine how the choice of words and phrases used by the journalists who wrote the various articles contributed in building the Nigerian nation. We will start with the article in Appendix ‘A’. The first word that hits the reader is the word ‘**scam**’ which stands out as an alarm in the headline. Semantically the word refers to a scheme of making money through dishonest means. In other words that word clearly warns the reader that what follows may not be so palatable if he is out to read a very juicy story. To confirm this line of thought further, the next word in the bolder headline shouts it out: ‘**Iyabo weeps**’. The author of this article purposely wants to portray the said Iyabo in a very bad light. The choice of words supports this claim. The picture inserted under the headline shows Mrs. Iyabo holding a white handkerchief in her

right hand. It could be to wipe her face in the event of profuse perspiration but the journalist wants all his readers to believe that the lady weeps. Again, through his choice of words, he paints a gory picture of Iyabo as an animal on the run from possible predators. Words and phrases such as ‘**resurfaced**’ (used twice in same piece) and ‘**holed-up**’ are reminiscent of the rabbit that has been in hiding for a long time. Now that she is finally apprehended, ‘**she is to cool her heels in police cells...**’ the author’s choice of the verb, ‘**slam**’ in the sentence: ‘**Iyabo pleaded not guilty to all the charges slammed against her by the EFCC**’ seems to suggest that the charges came with violence. This choice of word will certainly be appreciated by those who do not seem to like the lady very much while her admirers will feel that the journalist is unnecessarily hard on her. This is further supported by the verb in the statement: ‘**The accused was then whisked away by the police...**’ she was not just taken away. She was *whisked*. This is suggestive of the speed with which the police moved her away from the court premises.

The title and choice of lexical items used in Appendix ‘B’ are in total contradiction to what we have just witnessed in Appendix ‘A’. Unlike the ‘Iyabo Weeps’ headline of the first article, the second is written to paint a sympathetic and more amiable picture of the ‘victim’. The article reads: ‘**In sympathy with Grange**’. It is too obvious that the journalist who wrote this story actually wanted his readers to see the other and better side of the minister. He writes: ‘**The immediate past Health Minister, Mrs. Adenike Grange, a professor of pediatrics and technocrat who has been working in the international community...**’ A good number of other phrases and clauses used by this writer is aimed at appealing to the sensibilities of the reader not to crucify the minister because hers is not ‘... a case of avarice but a case of innocence if not naivety.’ Here is a typical example of a journalist using language to rebuild the nation. Before this article, this minister has been tried by the common masses of the nation and found guilty of embezzlement and misappropriation of funds but the journalist tries to re-write history.

In Appendix ‘C’, the tone of the reportage changed drastically. The journalist succeeds in estranging his personal feelings and attachments from the subject matter of his story. The choice of verbs lends credence to this position. In the very first sentence of this story, the reporter writes: ‘**The EFCC...says...**’ Here the verb portrays a neutral position. To further display the objectivity of the reportage, the reporter resorts to a great use of the register of law and the courts. The following examples will suffice. ‘...Iyabo is afraid of standing trial’, ‘... in the face of overwhelming evidence’, ‘...insisting on a court order compelling her appearance’, ‘...the senator is trying to frustrate her arraignment and subsequent trial’. ‘It deferred ruling till May 19’. ‘... Challenging the jurisdiction of the court’, ‘... the presence of the senator in court was a *sine qua non* (the condition precedent) to the consideration of the applications’. ‘He further asked the court to determine what legal effect of the leave it granted to the commission to amend the charges against the accused person’. ‘This honourable court has the jurisdiction to guard against the abuse of its process. From the processes filed before the court, the 12th accused person/applicant/respondent had earlier on May 11th 2008, filed a notice of preliminary objection seeking for orders of the court to strike out counts 55 and 56 in the charge in its entirety for want of jurisdiction or in the alternative an order striking out the name of the 12th accused person, pending the determination of the notice of preliminary objection filed on the 11th may 2008.’

I have taken great pains to make this elaborate quotation for one or two reasons. First I wish to establish an earlier position that the reporter in the above story maintains a high level of objectivity and neutrality in his reportage. The use of Latin expressions which he also explains through the use of parentheses also assists in alienating his person from the story. One other interesting aspect of this analysis is on the use of the qualifier *honorable* before the word court. This is an acceptable collocation in the register of legal terms. One can argue that the language of this reportage as it affects lexical items has gone a long way in enriching the vocabulary of students who would take the pains to read the article contextually or take the extra pains to look up some of these words in a good dictionary. This is an aspect of nation building.

The author of the article in Appendix ‘D’ seems to be concerned with figurative expressions. As we indicated in the introductory part of this paper a study of the style of a text also involves an examination of the use of imagery and other figurative expressions. This article (in Appendix D) provides a good illustration of this point as the following excerpts indicate. ‘This IyaboObasanjo’s case has become a *dark spot* on the commission. The expression *dark spot* as used in this context

suggests that the case has become the weak point of the commission or the testing point of the commission. The author makes a conscious effort to explain the context of his usage in the subsequent sentences thus: *‘It is becoming an exception. She should be treated like every other person. EFCC has not discharged its responsibilities creditably in this matter. The police too and other relevant agencies have not fared better.’* It can be seen, therefore, that the true meaning of the expression **dark spot** comes out clearly contextually. In another paragraph, the author uses another expression like *‘The EFCC is the creation of her father.’* This expression metaphorically ascribes the role of deism to the father. **Creation** in the above context tends to isolate the father of the woman and elevate him to the position of a demi-god who has the ultimate authority to create. This is a typical example of an exaggerated narrative etched in a well-coined metaphor. The figurative expression continues in the following expression ‘... there is no reason Iyabo should be treated *like a sacred cow.*’ This is what is commonly referred to as a simile in literary parlance which in itself is a watered-down metaphor. But then we have to ask: ‘what does the expression **sacred cow** connote? The 2008 Encarta Dictionary explains the term as: ‘**somebody or something beyond criticism:** somebody or something exempt from any criticism or interference.’ Due to space constraints, we may just have to examine only one other figurative expression from this story (Appendix D). It goes like this: ‘This is not the kind of case that can be *swept under the carpet.*’ This expression simply means to conceal or ignore something that needs attention. From the sketchy examination of the use of words and expressions which we have done here, one can say that this particular journalist has not written for the man in the street. Rather his choice of lexical items somewhat portrays him as an elitist writer who has a particular audience at heart as he composes his essay. This, again, is another aspect of nation building.

In the last story (Appendix E), the choice of words does not differ much from what has been observed in the previous ones. It repeated some of the clichés which run through the other stories like **financial scam, quash the charges** and so forth. At the same time, we have to credit the author of that story for introducing two key words that attract some analytical attention. The first one is the use of the foreign expression **absentia** in the cause of his reportage and the use of the symbolic word **cross** in the following expression: ‘...and that unlike civil cases the accused cannot delegate that **cross** to his or her lawyers’. The cross is a universal symbol. In fact the Microsoft Encarta Dictionary (2008) has fifteen entries on the word **cross**. But for the purpose of this analysis, we will adopt the first which reads:

- *Christian symbol: a long vertical bar intersected at right angles, usually about two-thirds up, by a shorter horizontal bar, used as a symbol of Christianity or of the Crucifixion.*

The shape refers to the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified.

- *Difficulty: a difficulty in somebody's personal life that is particularly testing, troubling, or painful.*

Thus the author uses the word **cross** as a symbol of difficulty which cannot be transferred to another person. In other words a combination of the first and twelfth entries portrays the word as being significant both as a symbol of difficulty, trouble test and a biblical allusion reminding the reader of the suffering of Christ on the cross. The author is thus alluding that IyaboObasanjo ought to suffer as a person. This is a tacit way of teaching readers to go beyond the ordinary letters printed on the pages of the newspapers.

SYNTACTIC FEATURES

Newspaper headlines are usually written in phrases, clauses or fragmented syntactic structures. It will be recalled that we stated that syntax, at the simplest level of analysis refers to the arrangement of words in a sentence or the grammatical arrangement of the various elements of a sentence. What we have witnessed in the papers under review is that most of the headlines are typical examples of elliptical expressions where either the operational word, the verb, is elided or the agentive (the noun or subject) is omitted. The following examples will illustrate the aforementioned points: ‘N300m scam:’ here the operational word, the verb is elided since we are not told what happened to the money. Our semantic intuition is only called to question. Then what quickly follows: ‘Iyabo weeps’ begins to fill the gap. The verb **weeps** helps to give a clearer picture of the otherwise nebulous situation. But towards the end of the same headline in Appendix ‘A’, we encounter another linguistic phenomenon of ellipsis. ‘... Sent to police cell’. This expression on its own does not say much because the agentive is absent. It is only when we sew the strings of information together from its *zigzag* formation that we surmise that it is the same Iyabo who weeps that has also been sent to police

cell. Semantically, this syntactic structure invites the reader to use his linguistic intuition to piece the puzzle together before meaningful utterances can be deduced. This same syntactic jugglery is witnessed in the headline of Appendix D where we have the following expression, ‘**IyaboObasanjo: ShehuSani accuses EFCC, police of cover-up.**’ The syntactic structure would certainly obscure the semantic implication of the caption if one does not take time to examine the language. Now the colon (:) after ‘IyaboObasanjo’ indicates that it is a story of continuity. The reader is presumably adjudged to have been following developments in the corruption scam probably from the earlier editions of the same paper. So it is reminding the reader that this is a follow-up to the old story. This takes the position of what is commonly referred to as the vocative case in the classical grammar model. Another syntactic complication is noticed in the second part of the caption which reads: ‘**Shehu Sani accuses EFCC, police of cover-up.**’ It is very interesting to note that two institutions are accused. Ordinarily, one would have expected that the two bodies: EFCC and the police be joined by the coordinating conjunction *and*. This is not so. Instead the reporter decides to use the comma to separate the two entities giving the linguistic impression that more nouns remain to be mentioned. This is one of the journalistic styles that give the reporters their own poetic license to use the syntax of English to their own advantage.

One can say that it is only the headline of Appendix E that is written in a very simple sentence: ‘**IyaboObasanjo must be tried in court, Lamorde says**’. Even in this caption one notices a kind of deviation from the norm. Most writers would have opted for: ‘Lamorde says...’ Again, this option would have looked so ordinary and elementary. Or they resort to the use of the (--) as in ‘IyaboObasanjo must be tried in court-- Lamorde’. This would have given the headline a more syntactic complication. But the journalist who wrote the story of Appendix E opted for a more simplistic syntactic option as a matter of choice and style.

The syntactic structure of the stories that make up the corpus of this story is a mixture of both simple and complex sentences. In some sentences the writers make use of very complex structures especially when they aim to create suspense on the minds of their readers. Let us examine the following example from Appendix A: ‘*After more than a month of running from the law, former First Daughter Senator IyaboObasanjo-Bello resurfaced in court yesterday, but she promptly broke down and wept when the court in Abuja ordered that she be remanded in police custody*’. The sentence begins with a subordinating clause marker, *after*, which clearly indicates the time frame. A confirmation of this time frame is found promptly in the phrase, *more than a month*. Immediately after this phrase, suspense is created (that is more than a month of what?). A prepositional phrase supplies the answer, *of running from the law*. At this point, the reader gets the first bit of information contained in the complex sentence structure. The noun phrase: *former First Daughter Senator IyaboObasanjo-Bello* contains nominal’s in apposition which appropriately would have been separated with a comma after the noun, *Daughter* since the phrases refer to the same and one person. Again one notices what can be called the journalistic style in the capitalization of the first letters in the words *First Daughter*. These words are meant to acquire the status of proper nouns since they refer to an exalted office of the child of the former president, an office created of course by this journalist. Lastly the writer makes use of two co-coordinating conjunctions in what is called paratactic structures (Syndetic parataxis, Agu 2008) *but* and *and* to bring the entire message of the sentence to a close. There are a plethora of other sentence structures in the stories but space constraints would not permit further analyses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has tried to examine the linguistic and stylistic aspects of newspaper reportage with the story of the unspent three hundred naira unspent budgetary allocation of the Federal Ministry of Health as a case study. It subjected the stories to three levels of linguistic analyses. These are graphological (which deals with the physical outlook of the printed words), the lexical (this deals with the choice of words and phrases) and the syntactic (which deals with the grammatical arrangement of words, phrases and clauses in the texts) components. In all, it was discovered that journalists write from three different perspectives. Some write to psychologically whip up sentiments through their choice of words and language of presentation, some write from the neutral point of view, that is writing objectively while some write for some specific members of the reading public. One other important factor arising from this study is the fact that the journalists are trained professionals who can use language to assume different roles. A case in point is the particular story that is replete with the language of law and judiciary. This is commendable to the extent that it is educative to the

audience that is educated enough to make meanings out of those flowery words and phrases. But to a large extent the message of the story would be a total loss to those who are not conversant with the language of the legal practice.

Based on the above conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- Newspaper reporters should strive to make their headlines speak clearly. This is because of the fact that the headlines attract the attention of the prospective readers.
- The headlines should not mislead the readers. Some headlines are just mere propaganda. They have little or no bearing with the stories they portray.
- Reporters should bear in mind that the language of their reportage has much to do with the overall image of their profession. They should not over indulge in the use of foreign words and phrases since a good number of the reading public will have little or no time to consult the dictionaries.

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